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Chattanooga Public Works to Resume Residential Curbside Recycling Service for Participating Residents on Nov. 1st

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Oct. 1, 2021) – The Chattanooga Department of Public Works announces enough qualified CDL drivers are in the hiring pipeline to resume curbside recycling service, with the first pickup date scheduled for Nov. 1, 2021.

On August 3 Mayor Tim Kelly [announced](#) curbside recycling service could resume pending passage of a 42.6 percent pay increase to recruit new CDL drivers to the city workforce – an expenditure that was contingent upon City Council's approval of the 2021-2022 budget. After a two-week pause in the legislative process to allow for additional public comment on the adjusted tax rate, Council passed the budget on Sept. 28, 2021.

"Since having to pause curbside recycling due to a labor shortage, Public Works and HR have done everything possible to recruit and hire new CDL drivers so we could hit the ground running once we had a budget," said Chief of Staff Brent Goldberg. "Now that we're able to provide essential pay to our essential workers, we can maintain continuity to the services that make cities livable and sustainable—the services that Chattanoogaans expect and depend on."

A temporary interruption to recycling was [announced](#) July 29 as Public Works was so short on CDL drivers the department needed to recruit additional manpower to cover their full scope of residential services at the curb (garbage, brush, and recycling). To attract and retain enough drivers to reverse the suspension, Mayor Kelly allocated a sharp increase in their starting pay in his FY 2021-2022 budget legislation, filed with City Council on Aug. 10.

Public Works will empty curbside recycling bins using the zone-based collection schedule to which the department previously adhered; to find out where your residence falls in the biweekly collection schedule by zone, visit the website [here](#).

Mayor Kelly's administration is committed to Chattanooga being a sustainable city and so is investigating ways to collaborate on waste reduction with major stakeholders such as TDEC and The Recycling Partnership, as well as the regional private waste-hauler Westrock which is most engaged in finding aftermarket buyers for materials generated by the City's recycling program.

That's why later this month the City of Chattanooga and The Company Lab will partner on a Recycling Pitch & Pilot Competition –held Oct. 19 from noon to 2:00 p.m.– to solicit creative ideas on use of technology, infrastructure, and awareness to divert more reusable material from landfill. Members of the public are invited to submit ideas on how to: create a local circular

economy, educate businesses and residents on how to recycle right, improve labor and logistics efficiencies in the processing of recyclables, and reduce food waste.

"Ours is a city with a strong identity rooted in the great outdoors and a commitment to sustainability," said Mayor Tim Kelly. "I count myself fortunate to be mayor where people care deeply about limiting waste and litter. I'll be interested to hear ideas from local entrepreneurs and the public on how together we can put Chattanooga on a path to becoming a zero-waste community."

Having residents who are well-informed on what materials are (and are not) recyclable is proven to reduce contamination in municipal waste streams, which in turn reduces what private contractors charge the public sector for processing—meaning "recycling right" saves taxpayer dollars. Residents can learn what types of materials Public Works will accept by reviewing the list at: <http://www.chattanooga.gov/public-works/city-wide-services/pw-recycling>

"Chattanooga –like other cities across the country– is confronting the challenge of trying to divert as much commercial and household waste as possible from the regional landfill," said Director of Sustainability Erik Schmidt. "Thinking about Zero Waste is not just a way to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, save taxpayer money long term, and keep the city healthy and clean; it's also an opportunity to repurpose recyclable material for new and locally-owned businesses to thrive in an emerging green economy."

Between now and Nov. 1, residents may drop off their presorted recyclables at any of Public Works' five area convenience centers, open 7 days per week:

- 5955 Brainerd Road
- 1250 E. 3rd Street
- 3189 Cummings Hwy
- 8004 Batters Place Road
- 4504 N. Access Road

Residents may also call 311 at 423-643-6311 with any additional questions.

The Chattanooga Department of Public Works delivers a variety of services that Chattanooga's citizens rely on daily. Responsibilities include the design, construction, and maintenance of infrastructure; the interceptor sewer system; the City's stormwater system; the collection and disposal of garbage, brush, recycling, and household hazardous waste; parks maintenance, programming, and operations.

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